

REMARKS

In the office action of November 13, 2008 (the "Office Action"), the Examiner rejected claims 1-17 on obviousness grounds. The primary reference, Int'l Pat. App. No. WO 2001/066231 to Dannström et al. ("Dannstrom") was combined with U.S. Pat. No. 3,722,694 to Agranat ("Agranat"), U.S. Pat. No. 3,027,715 to Morris ("Morris"), and U.S. Pat. No. 2,678,529 to Buchi ("Buchi") to reject claims 1-4, 7, 8, 13-15, and 17.

Claims 5 and 6 were rejected as obvious over the combination of Dannstrom, Agranat, Morris, Buchi, and Int'l Pat. App. No. WO 1999/026717 to Jitariouk ("Jitariouk"). Claims 9-11 were rejected as obvious over the combination of Dannstrom, Agranat, Morris, Buchi, and U.S. Pat. No. 4,689,150 to Abe et al. ("Abe"). Claim 12 was rejected as obvious over the combination of Dannstrom, Agranat, Morris, Buchi, and U.S. Pat. No. 5,352,361 to Prasad et al. ("Prasad"). Claim 16 was rejected as obvious over the combination of Dannstrom, Agranat, Morris, Buchi, Abe and further in view of U.S. Pat. No. 6,503,294 to Yoshikawa et al. ("Yoshikawa").

Support for Claim Amendments

Applicants believe the claim amendments are fully supported by the specification at paragraph [0026] and reference number 18 in FIGs. 1 and 5.

Rejection of claims 1-4, 7, 8, 13-15, and 17

Claims 1-4, 7, 8, 13-15, and 17 were rejected as obvious over the combination of Dannstrom in view of Agranat, Morris and Buchi. As amended, claim 1 requires, among other things, "a plurality of separation assemblies in side by side relationship" and "at least one elbow conduit" to provide fluid communication between separation assemblies. As amended, the prior art fails to show the limitations of claim 1. Simply stated, the Dannstrom, Agranat, Morris, and/or Buchi references, individually or in combination, fail to show multiple separation assemblies connected by at least one

elbow conduit. The Examiner does not address this limitation in the Office Action. For at least these reasons, Applicants believe that claim 1 is patentable over the prior art and respectfully request allowance of claim 1. Because claims 2-16 depend (directly or indirectly) from claim 1, it is believed that at least claims 1-16 are allowable over the prior art for at least this reason and Applicants respectfully request allowance of pending claims 1-16.

As amended, claim 17 requires, among other things, "a plurality of stacked separation assemblies" and "a first elbow conduit configured to provide the fluid communication between the first manifold of one separation assembly and the first manifold of an adjacent separation assembly." As amended, the prior art fails to show the limitations of claim 17. The Examiner does not address this limitation in the Office Action. For at least these reasons, Applicants believe that claim 17 is patentable over the prior art and respectfully request allowance of claim 17.

Completeness of the Office Action

Applicants have reviewed the Office Action for any discussion of the limitations of claim 14, which requires a "first pressure above 1,200 psia." Applicants could not locate any such discussion. Applicants would appreciate the opportunity to fully and competently respond to the rejection of claim 14 and therefore request a more particular statement from the Examiner regarding this limitation.

Conclusion

In view of the amendments and remarks set forth above, Applicants respectfully request allowance of all pending claims. While no fees are believed to be due, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 05-1328 for any fees associated with extensions of time for this application. Further, if the Examiner believes that an additional telephonic interview will help speed this application toward issuance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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